

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 10-11-2020

AUB holds international virtual conference **on efficient building design**

The Fourth International ASHRAE Conference on Efficient Building Design was hosted by the American University of Beirut (AUB) in virtual format on November 5 and 6. The event, which was attended by around 360 participants, focused on novel building technologies that enhance environmental quality in buildings and the impact of energy reforms on both the demand and the environmental quality, with the goal of saving costs while providing the needed thermal and air quality environment for better performance and improved health.

During the event, concepts for improved efficiency and interventions that are adaptive to climate were disseminated, including building fabric technologies, natural, mixed, and mechanical ventilation practices/systems to maintain thermally comfortable environment while relying on renewable energy as applicable. The conference also communicated concepts for smart building system designs and for integrating technologies that are passive, personalized/modular, and energy efficient; as well as tackling the human behavior in adopting these technologies and understanding their impact in reducing energy consumption and reducing the carbon footprint of buildings. In addition, the virtual conference highlighted some pertinent topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic through a training course titled “Designing High Performance Healthcare HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) Systems” that addressed, as one of its key objectives, the process on how to convert a hospital into a specialty hospital for treating COVID-19 patients.

This event was organized by the Munib and Angela Masri Institute of Energy and Natural Resources at AUB, in partnership with the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA), the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), and the ASHRAE Lebanese Chapter.

The conference featured 45 local and international speakers and hosted six live keynote presentations and panel sessions from experts and professionals in the field. It featured ten tracks, and eight featured presentations on the “Rebuilding Beirut” theme, dedicated to the reconstruction of Beirut as an efficient, safe, and resilient city with the participation of international associations and support from the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Another session that was held during the conference was a UNEP live session titled "Policies and Codes to Enable Compliance with the Montreal Protocol" which shed light on key codes and policies recommended for the efficient implementation of the Montreal Protocol with focus on the elements and components that are most relevant to the building sectors. In addition, a live panel was held, on reform in sustainable energy and HVAC education and training, that is integrated in universities' specialized master programs, as well as the experience related to professional training through the ASHRAE Learning Institute and the impact of these endeavors on progress in this field.

The conference proceedings of the 37 papers published by ASHRAE was 320 pages.

The opening session

Several key figures attended and spoke at the conference's opening session, including Interim Provost Zaher Dawy who relished the opportunity to welcome the attendees and thanked those who are trying to advance the cause of energy efficiency in buildings, and said that he was particularly pleased to see the engagement of students in the conference as an opportunity to interact first hand with top researchers and practitioners in the field.

MSFEA Dean Alan Shihadeh also said during the opening session, “Buildings – both their construction and their use – are one of the major drivers of global warming. Whole system design involving all the disciplines simultaneously is the best way to mitigate their effects, and ASHRAE has been a champion of this approach.”

Dr. Nesreen Ghaddar, conference chair and professor of mechanical engineering, also spoke at the opening session. “When buildings are addressed via renovation or new construction, systemic innovation is important to generate maximum improvement in performance,” she said. “We would like to engage researchers, professionals, and building stakeholders to work together to advance such sustainable solutions at affordable costs. And contributions from every field are essential to accelerate efforts for the decarbonization of our building sector.”

Group Managing Director of Edgo Omar Masri delivered a speech on behalf of the Masri family. He spoke about the resilience of the Lebanese professionals and international organizations, in the wake of the Beirut blast and the damage in architectural buildings, as they are advancing solutions that would support the conference theme for rebuilding Beirut.

ASHRAE President Charles E. Gullledge and President of the Lebanese ASHRAE Chapter Wassim Abdallah also attended and spoke at the opening ceremony.

Gullledge said that “the conference offers the global industry a window into the engineering practices in MENA region, the rebuilding of Beirut, and the state of HVAC&R (heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigerating) education.” He added, “I’m pleased to recognize that ASHRAE’s sustainability and energy conservation goals align closely with the work of the American University of Beirut.”

Abdallah said that due to the multiple crises Lebanon is currently facing, “students and professionals are leaving, looking for a better future abroad.” He added, “our duty is to stop this brain drain and to work with our partners to find solutions by creating opportunities, mainly employment, for these people to stay and build their future here.”

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar
Director of News and Media Relations
Mobile: (+961) 3-427-024
Office: (+961) 1-374-374 ext: 2676
Email: sk158@aub.edu.lb

Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor’s, master’s, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

Stay up to date on AUB news and events. Follow us on:

Website: www.aub.edu.lb
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/aub.edu.lb>
Twitter: http://twitter.com/AUB_Lebanon